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Digging holes abroad. An ethnography of Dutch archaeological research projects abroad.

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Stellingen behorende bij het proefschrift ‘Digging Holes Abroad – An Ethnography of Dutch Archaeological Research Projects Abroad’ by Sjoerd Jaap van der Linde, dd. 18 December 2012, Universiteit Leiden.

1. Archaeological research projects abroad should be integrated with value-based heritage management assessments and a self-reflexive ethnographic approach as to promote equitable, ethical and locally sustainable practices of research, heritage management and collaboration.
2. Policies and practices of Dutch archaeological research projects abroad are characterized by an authorized archaeological discourse that privileges professional expertise, knowledge of a universally significant past, archaeological fieldwork and the scientific value of material remains of the past.
3. The attribution of expertise and ownership to archaeological actors and the exclusion of local partners from project networks and benefits, is an (often unintended) result of a top-down process of policy negotiation in which project policies, authorized archaeological discourses and actor agencies together prioritize archaeological and scientific values over alternative values.
4. Due to the historical, socio-political and discursive context of archaeological projects abroad, archaeological academics are often placed in positions of ‘gatekeepers’ of the past with a power to make decisions over material remains and sites that impacts upon the needs and values of others in society.
5. Dutch archaeologists cannot hide behind a notion of archaeology as a neutral activity free from political and social responsibility; rather, they should actively facilitate the negotiation of values with other actors in society that are affected by archaeological conduct.
6. Dutch funding bodies should better allow for the implementation, resourcing and evaluation of long-term research collaborations in which heritage issues are seen as a fundamental part of archaeological conduct, and not as a well-intended afterthought.
7. Performance evaluations of university archaeologists should expand beyond the current publication outputs, scale of funding and student supervision, to include (measurable) heritage, development and societal relevance indicators.
8. Heritage management, development sociology and science communication should receive more attention in Dutch archaeological curricula.
9. Archaeological projects should make better use of new and social media as to better engage the people for whom we work.
10. A doctoral student who begins with ambition and ends with doubt has at any rate spent time on reflection.